

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 H-02 AID-05 CEA-01 CIAE-00

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ERDA-05 L-03 OIC-02 PA-01 PM-04 PRS-01 SAJ-01 SS-15

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, CSCE, PO

SUBJECT: CSCE BASKET II: CONGRESSIONAL REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

REFS: (A) STATE 233202, (B) LISBON 6765

1. BELOW ARE COMMENTS ON PORTUGUESE STATISTICAL SERVICES,
BASIC DESCRIPTION OF WHICH WAS INCLUDED IN REF B.

2. PRINCIPAL SOURCE FOR PORTUGUESE ECONOMIC STATISTICS
IS NATIONAL STATISTICAL INSTITUTE (NSI), AN AGENCY OF
THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND ECONOMIC COORDINATION.
NSI PUBLISHES DATA COMPILED FROM GOP MINISTRIES AND
SEMI-AUTONOMOUS AGENCIES. SECONDARY SOURCE IS BANK
OF PORTUGAL.

3. QUALITY, QUANTITY AND TIMELINESS OF PORTUGUESE
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STATISTICS IS GENERALLY UNSATISFACTORY. NSI LACKS
ADEQUATE TECHNICAL COMPETENCE TO USE SOPHISTICATED

STATISTICAL CONCEPTS. SOME COMPARATIVE BENCHMARKS ARE SERIOUSLY OUT-OF-DATE AND COLLECTION OF TIMELY RAW DATA IS DEFICIENT. IN ADDITION, NSI HAS SUFFERED SEVERAL WORK STOPPAGES OVER LAST SIX MONTHS. THUS, IT HAS MADE RELATIVELY LITTLE PROGRESS IN IMPROVING STATISTICAL REPORTING DURING THE PAST YEAR.

4. MOST ANNUAL STATISTICS ARE PUBLISHED IN FINAL FORM WITH 1 TO 1-1/2 YEAR DELAY. MANY MONTHLY DATA ARE PUBLISHED WITH A LAG OF FOUR OR MORE MONTHS, BUT EVEN SO ARE OFTEN TENTATIVE OR INCOMPLETE. SOME DAILY STATISTICS, SUCH AS DAILY FOREIGN EXCHANGE AVAILABILITIES, ARE RUNNING 75 DAYS BEHIND. DIFFERENT NSI PUBLICATIONS OCCASIONALLY PRESENT CONFLICTING DATA. BOTH GOP OFFICIALS AND PRIVATE BUSINESS COMPLAIN THAT PLANNING IS IMPOSSIBLE GIVEN INADEQUATE STATISTICAL INFORMATION. FOR EXAMPLE, COST OF LIVING INDEX BASED ON MARKET BASKET COMPILED IN 1948. NO TIMELY, EFFECTIVE SYSTEM EXISTS FOR GATHERING GNP DATA. UNEMPLOYMENT DATA ARE HIGHLY UNRELIABLE. THERE ARE, HOWEVER, SEVERAL NOTABLE EXCEPTIONS TO THIS GENERAL RULE. BANK OF PORTUGAL BALANCE OF PAYMENTS DATA ARE GENERALLY ACCURATE AND TIMELY. AGRICULTURAL INFORMATION, THOUGH SOMEWHAT SELECTIVE, IS GENERALLY COMPLETE ENOUGH TO PERMIT REASONABLE MARKET AND CROP ASSESSMENTS AND FORECASTS.

5. ALTHOUGH THE GOP HAS AT TIMES ADJUSTED TIMING OF PUBLICATION OF STATISTICS TO SUIT ITS POLITICAL/ ECONOMIC ENDS, IT CLEARLY INTENDS TO IMPROVE THE STATE OF STATISTICAL SERVICES. A NORWEGIAN TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TEAM IS NOW ADVISING THE NSI ON IMPROVING ITS STATISTICAL METHODS AND THE TEAM CONFIRMS THAT THE GOP EARNESTLY DESIRES TO CREATE A STATISTICAL SERVICE WHICH WOULD PROVIDE AN ADEQUATE STATISTICAL BASE FOR ECONOMIC FORECASTING AND PLANNING. USG SHOULD ENCOURAGE THESE EFFORTS AND SHOULD PROVIDE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE IF REQUESTED. CARLUCCI

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